

Joseph Gilpin House (Lafayette Quarters)
U. S. Route # 1,1 mile east of Chadds Ford
Birmingham Township
Delaware County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1116

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

JOSEPH GILPIN HOUSE (LAFAYETTE QUARTERS)

Location: On U. S. 1 about one mile east of Chadds Ford,
Birmingham Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: The Brandywine Battlefield Park Commission, a state
agency, directly under the Governor of Pennsylvania.

Present Occupant: None.

Present Use: The house has been restored and is open to the public.

Statement of
Significance: This early stone house, part of which dates from
c. 1695, was used by Lafayette during the Battle of
Brandywine.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: In 1691 and 1694 Joseph Gilpin acquired two joining tracts of land from his wife's uncle, William Lamboll. In about 1695 he erected a one-and-a-half story frame dwelling on this land. His son Joseph succeeded him in 1739. At his death in 1764 his son Gideon Gilpin inherited the estate, which was sold in the year 1828 to William Painter. His son, Samuel Painter, inherited the house in 1845 and sold it in 1870 to Joseph C. Turner, to whose widow the house passed in 1902. At her death in 1903 it was sold to Dr. Arthur H. Cleveland and was passed to his son, Arthur H. Cleveland Jr., in 1940. In 1949 the State of Pennsylvania purchased the house from him.
2. Date of erection: The one-and-a-half story frame section (the southeast part of the building) dates from about 1695.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.: Unknown. Mr. G. Edwin Brumbaugh was the restoration architect.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: No original plans known. The small original house is frame with brick between the uprights, the whole covered with clapboards. The clapboard section consisting of one-and-a-half stories of one room per floor.
5. Alterations and additions: The two-and-a-half story stone addition to the west is dated 1745, and the story-and-a-

half stone wing to the north of the original frame house is dated 1782. The stone wall supporting the stone stoop is dated 1767. The root house to the north is dated 1809 and the barn 1791. The latter has not as yet been restored. The spring house is not dated but appears to be an 18th-century structure.

6. Important old views and references:

- a. Lossing, Benson J. Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855.
Page 172 contains a view of the house.
- b. Futhey, J. Smith and Cope, Gilbert. History of Chester County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881.
Page 71 also shows the house.
- c. The Chester County Historical Society in West Chester, Pennsylvania, has a large collection of views from the late 19th century to date. It has also been the subject of many sketches and paintings.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

The Gilpins were from Dorchester, county of Oxford, England, and long were members of the Society of Friends. The fifteen children of the first settler all married. (It seems another Gilpin house on the same tract was used by General Howe as his headquarters during the Battle of Brandywine.) The home of Gideon Gilpin was used by Lafayette, and it was still occupied by Gideon when Lafayette made his return trip to the United States. Gideon lived only a very short time after he was visited by the French hero. The house was also an inn for several years (1778-1789). A copy of the first petition "to keep a Publick House of Entertainment" at Gilpin House is included under Part I, C of this report, as is an extract from a local paper describing Lafayette's 1825 visit to the Gilpin House. The building was used by Howard Pyle, the well-known illustrator, when he conducted a summer art school about 1900. Considerable data is to be found in the Chester County Historical Society on the house and its occupants.

C. Supplemental Material:

1. The Brandywine Story 1777-1952. The Brandywine Battlefield Park Commission, September 11, 1952.

Note: All of the following may be found in the classified printed and manuscript files of the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania, under the headings "Battle of Brandy-

wine - Lafayette Quarters" and "Gilpin Family."

2. "To the Justices of the Court of General Quarter Sessions to be held at Chester for the County of Chester the 25th day of August 1778.

"The Petition of Gideon Gilpin of the Township of Birmingham near Chad's Ford in said County Humble Sheweth.

"That Whereas your Petitioner & other the Inhabitants near Brandywine have been Greatly Embarrassed by Travellers for want of a Public House in that Neighbourhood & as Joseph Davis has Declined keeping Tavern & he with other Neighbours seems desirous that I should keep one being the Nighest house to the Creek that were willing to undertake it, Your Petitioner having provided somethings Necessary to Acomodate Travellers should take it a favor to Recommend him to his Honor the Vice President as a fit & Suitable Person to keep a Publick House of Entertainment at the place aforesaid & your Petitioner as in Duty Bound shall Acknowledge the Favor.

"We the Subscribers being well Acquainted with the above Petitioner do think him a fit Person to keep a Publick House of Entertainment at the place aforesaid & likewise think there is a great Occasion for one as many persons are frequently Stop'd by Freshet in Brandywine & are obliged to put in on their Neighbours besides Travellers at other times.

Charles Dilworth
and 40 other names"

[Copy of Original Manuscript.]

3. "An Acc't of Goods & Chattles Belonging To Gedian Gilpin Taken & Destroyed by the British army under the Command of Gen'l Howe at & near Chads Ford the 11th day of Sepr 1777

	L	S	P
To 10 Milch Cows.....	75	00	0
To 1 Yoke of Oxen.....	20	00	0
7 Yearlings.....	17	10	0
6 Spring Calves.....	9	00	0
48 Sheep.....	36	00	0
28 Swine.....	40	00	0
3 Colts.....	50	00	0
230 Bushels of Wheat.....	74	15	0
120 do of Corn.....	15	00	0
12 Tunns of Hay.....	48	00	0
20 Bushels of Buckwheat.....	2	10	0
100 do of Potatoes.....	10	00	0

	L	S	P
$\frac{1}{2}$ doz. Sheets.....	3.00.0		
1 Bed Tick & Coverlid.....	2.10.0		
1 Table Cloth & Towel & 3 Pillow Cases.....	1.10.0		
1 Large Pewter Dish & Bason.....	3.00.0		
1 Looking Glass.....	1.02.6		
1 Ironpot tubs & pails.....	1.01.0		
1 Clock.....	5.00.0		
Saddle & Bridle.....	3.07.6		
50 Wt. of Bacon.....	1.07.6		
1 Case of Bottles.....	0.17.6		
To Leather.....	2.10.0		
Kitchen & Cupb'd Furniture.....	3.00.0		
Suels History.....	1.00.0		
To 1 Gun.....	1.05.0		
Grid Iron & Smoothing do and Skelet.....	1.10.0		
Smiths Buck & other tools.....	1.10.0		
4000 Rails.....	12.00.0		
Pasture.....	20.00.0		
Fruit Destroyed.....	70.00.0		
Timber Destroyed.....	7.10.0		
2 New Baggs.....	0.15.0		
20 Yards of Shirting Linen.....	3.00.0		

"Before me Came the aforesaid Gedian Gilpin who on his Solemn affirmation did declare & say that the above Sum of Five hundred & 2L6p is a just & true Estimate or Valuation of the Effects before mentioned to the best of his Knowledge & that he never Rec'd any Value toward the Same to which he assigns his name Before me Isaac Taylor Novr 16th 1782"

/Copy of original of "A Register of the Damages Sustained by the Inhabitants of the County of Chester in Pennsylvania from the Troops and Adherents of the King of Great Brittain during the present War agreeable to an Act of General Assembly passed September 21st. 1782"/

4. "VISIT OF GEN. LA FAYETTE To the Brandywine Battle Ground and West Chester.

"According to previous arrangments, on Monday afternoon, the 25th, Gen. J. W. Cuninghame, one of the Committee; Samson Babb, and Wm. Williamson, Esqrs. assistant Marshalls, waited on Gen. La Fayette, at Mr. Dupont's, prepared to escort him the next morning to Chads Ford.

"On Tuesday morning the Committee repaired to Chads-Ford, one important position of the battle ground, where they were

met by the committee from Delaware County. The Delaware County Volunteer Cavalry, commanded by Capt. Vanlear, soon appeared upon the ground, and was joined directly after by the Chester County Troop, under the command of Lieut. Jones, the whole under the command of Maj. Wilson.

"The eagerness of the public to see the Nation's Guest, seemed unabated, and a great concourse of citizens, in carriages, on horseback, and on foot, gathered at this point. While waiting for his approach, Cols. McClellan and Humphrey, accompanied by several gentlemen, visited the encampment of Washington, and the old redoubt, which are still plainly to be seen.

"Near noon the General arrived. He was accompanied by his son George Washington La Fayette, Mr. La Vasseur, his Secretary, Mr. Bauduois, a distinguished Barrister from Paris; his friend Mr. Dupont; Messrs. Lewis and Biddle, Committee of Councils from Philadelphia; and Messrs. M'Lean and Williamson Committee, from Wilmington.

"On coming to the Brandywine near Chad's Ford, the Gen. remarked- 'It could not be here we crossed; it must have been further up.' He was right. At Chad's-Ford he was met by Maj. General Barnard and Suite, consisting of Col. Leiper and Daniel Buckwalter, esq. his Aids; Brig. Gens. Evans and Stanley and their Aids; most of the Committee of Arrangement, consisting, besides Gen. Barnard, Gen. Evans, Gen. Cuninghame, previously named, of Col. M'Clellan, Chairman, Col. Jacob Humphrey, Col. Wayne, Col. Cromwell Pearce, and Abraham Baily, Esq. Joseph Sharp, Esq. Chief Marshal, Thomas H. B. Jacobs, & Jesse Conard, Esqs. his Aids; and the following gentlemen as Assistant Marshals.

Joshua Hunt	David Potts
Thomas H. Brinton	Richard Walker
Joshua M'Minn	Jonathan Jones
Isaac Trimble	Jos. M'Clellan, jr.

and the Cavalry under the command of Maj. Wilson. Here Col. M'Clellan, the companion in arms of Gen. La Fayette, entered the carriage with him.

"The procession moved into the field where our army encamped the night before the battle. 'Can you tell me,' said the General, 'where the bridge of rails was across the Brandywine?' - No one knew. The ground did not seem perfectly familiar, yet he pointed out the position of Gen. Wayne and Maxwell's brigades; the procession returned from the field, and advanced towards Painter's X Roads. About a mile from the Ford, the Gen. stopped and alighted from his carriage to see Gideon Gilpin, a very aged man, now confined to bed,

and apparently near the close of life, at whose house he staid a night before the battle. The sick man was gratified by a sight of the veteran, who pressed his hand cordially and wished him every blessing.- At Dilworthtown a large concourse of people had gathered; here the procession halted ten minutes, and then turning off to the left, proceeded to the main battle ground, 'Show me,' said the Gen. 'where is the meeting house?' When they came fully in view and it was pointed out to him, 'O,' said he, 'It is here,' and immediately rose to his feet and addressing himself in French to his son and companions spoke animatedly for some time; pointing out the different positions of the two armies. Every thing was now familiar to him. The position of Col M'Clellan was near him when wounded; the spot the Gen. pointed out, in the cornfield of Jacob Bennett, a little east and south of where the road from the meeting house comes in at right angles with the east and west road. The procession after a little time moved to the meeting house where an immense number had convened to receive him; after viewing the ground here, the General, his companions and friends alighted at the hospitable mansion of Samuel Jones, Esq. to which they had been previously invited, and partook of excellent refreshments most abundantly provided for the occasion.* Here were shown to the General large numbers of bullets and other remains of the contest, found and collected by Mr. Abraham Darlington, jr. The visit to this ground was exceedingly interesting to La Fayette. The universal welcome given him; the hospitable manner in which he was entertained; the association of ideas, his companions in arms coming vividly to his recollection; it was here he first met danger, and received a wound in defence of the cause he had espoused- the hour of suffering was past and the hour of triumph had come; he was sensibly affected. *An ungenerous report was circulated that Mr. Jones expected pecuniary remuneration; it is just to say, that the report is totally void of truth; the entertainment was as freely given as it was liberally provided."

/Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, August 3, 1825./

5. "On the 20th inst. in Birmingham township, Delaware county, GIDEON GILPIN, aged within a few days of 88 years; a respectable citizen, the last male left here who was a resident on the battleground at the battle of Brandywine. Joseph Gilpin and Hannah his wife, grand-parents to Gideon, came from England with William Penn on his second visit to Pennsylvania, and had 15 children: 9 daughters and 6 sons, all of whom they lived to see married, except one (the youngest,) and all to their satisfaction; two of whose ages added equal 183 years.

"From this pair (Joseph and Hannah) we believe has issued a more numerous off spring than any that has visited Pennsylvania, or perhaps any part of the United States: as they generally had numerous issue. Gideon was born, raised, and died on the plantation he owned at his decease, a few years in youth excepted."

Village Record, West Chester, Pennsylvania, September 7, 1825.

6. "10 mo; (1823) Susanna Gilpin, wife of Gideon, died & buried the 16th aged about 75 married to Gideon nearly 16 years not a very agreeable woman to any person very sordid unfeeling & a great share of supercilious false pride which left her few friends in the neighborhood."

An extract from the Gilpin Necrology in possession of the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

7. "PURSUANT to the last will and testament of Gideon Gilpin, dec'd, will be sold at Public Sale on the 7th day the 15th of the 12th month,

"That Valuable Farm now in the tenure of William Woodward, situate in the township of Birmingham, Delaware county, containing two hundred and thirty one acres and some perches; bounded by the lands of James Bennet, dec'd. Eli Harvey, Wm. Painter, Isaac G. Gilpin and others, about one mile from Chadd's Ford, on Brandywine, ten from Wilmington, thirteen from Old Chester, and three from Concord Meeting House. On this plantation which is esteemed as fertile as any in the county, is erected a convenient Stone and Frame dwelling house, with a kitchen attached thereto, a good Stone Barn with stabling underneath, stone wagon house with convenient room over it, a stone spring house over a never failing spring and other out buildings; there is about thirty acres of watered meadow; seventy acres of heavy timbered land, and the remainder is divided into eight convenient fields with water in each, that has afforded a great sufficiency at all seasons for the stock, and has long been used as a grazing farm; on it is an Apple orchard, and other fruit trees.

"Any person wishing to view the premises will be shown them by applying to Moses Palmer, or Samuel Hewes, in Concord or Wm. Woodward on the premises. Sale to commence on the farm at one o'clock P.M. on said day & conditions made known by

Nov. 20.1827.

Moses Palmer,
Samuel Hewes,
Executors."

American Republican, West Chester, Pennsylvania, November
27, 1827.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house is believed to be one of the few remaining examples of an English-type framed house covered with clapboards typical of the late seventeenth century. The stone additions are interesting as well-preserved examples of an early stone Pennsylvania house with dependencies.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house is one-and-a-half stories high, with two additions - the one two-and-a-half stories high and the other one-and-a-half stories high. The house is constructed of frame and masonry. The frame portion is seventeen feet, six inches (17'-6") by twenty feet, two inches (20'-2"). The two-and-a-half story stone addition (1745) is eighteen feet, two inches (18'-2") by thirty feet, one inch (30'-1"). The one-and-a-half story stone addition (1782) is twenty-one feet, nine inches (21'-9") by nineteen feet (19').
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: The wall construction in the frame portion of the house consists of brick fill covered with hand-split clapboards of shaved native red oak. The wall construction of the later additions is rubble masonry of uncoursed field-stone.
4. Porches: The porch on the south side has been dated 1767 due to the date stone which supports the stoop at the front door.
5. Chimneys: In original locations, but they have been rebuilt in part. The chimney located on the ridge over the eastern part of the roof of the original house is approximately 20 rows of brick in height. There is another chimney located on the ridge of the north partition. It is wider than the brick chimney and is of the same rubble masonry as the stone of the house. There is another brick chimney located at the western side and is approximately 18 rows of brick in height.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: All appear to be original. There is one door leading to the 1695 section on the south side. There is one door on the west side of the 1782 section and one door on both south and north sides of the 1745 section. All are constructed of heavy wooden battens.
- b. Windows and shutters: All appear to be original except a second-floor window, east wall, in the two-and-a-half story addition. The windows of the stone sections of the house are generally six-over-six-light double-hung wooden sash. The windows of the frame section are many mullioned single casement windows. There are no shutters present.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Steep pitch, gable roof with wooden shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Shed type pent eave on 1745 section with return on east side. Wooden flat bottomed cornice of same section with full return on west side and partial return on east side. All are restorations.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The original house and the north addition each have one room on a floor. The two-and-a-half story addition of 1745 has two rooms on each floor and one in the attic.
2. Stairways: There are three stairways in the house, one in each of the three sections. They are all of the spiral type.
3. Flooring: The flooring in the house has been replaced in most cases with 10 - 12 inch wooden planks.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster finish in the house, with board partitions (all replacements).
5. Doorways and doors: These are chiefly replacements in the house.
6. Trim: Little trim except for simple wooden mouldings and panelled sections.
7. Hardware: Restorations of original wrought and cast iron

hardware. Iron pegs present in the gunstock post of the 1695 section.

8. Lighting: Eighteenth-century candlesticks in the house.
9. Heating: All of the original fireplaces remain in each section of the house. They are all large arched openings with little or no wooden decorative mouldings or mantels.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south on high land, with excellent background. The cart house is to the northwest of the house.
2. Outbuildings: The root house (1809), spring house, and cart house are all in good condition. The barn of 1791 has not yet been restored.
3. Walks: Brick.
4. Landscaping: Good trees and lawn. The finest tree is a three-hundred year old sycamore, with a branch spread of over 100 feet, standing to the west of the house.

Prepared by Bart Anderson
Curator, Chester County
Historical Society
National Park Service
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